

## Notes from the President

### *Celebrating Innovation: FireHUD Wins the 2016 InVenture Prize*

03/23/2016

One of my favorite nights of the year is the Georgia Tech InVenture Prize competition, which has affectionately been called “American Idol for Geeks.” The InVenture Prize, created in 2009, has grown into the largest competition of its kind in the country. It was organized by Georgia Tech faculty as an interdisciplinary innovation competition open to all of our undergraduate students and recent graduates.

InVenture brings together student innovators from all academic backgrounds across campus in an effort to foster innovation and entrepreneurship. They identify problems and devise solutions that require not just technical knowledge, but creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration, and business acumen. The finals are held before a live audience of more than 1,000 fans and observers and are broadcast live in partnership with Georgia Public Broadcasting at our Ferst Center for the Arts. The combination of a live audience and GPB’s broadcast do an excellent job transforming the contest into an exciting and entertaining live competition.

More than 500 students signed up for the [2016 contest](#), the finals for which were held March 16. Six teams were selected to participate in the finals, where they show a video, offer a live presentation, and answer questions from a panel of judges composed of venture capitalists and other entrepreneurs. This year’s winning team was FireHUD, which invented a device that helps firefighters track their vital signs while fighting fires. FireHUD’s Zachary Braun, a computer engineering major, and Tyler Sisk, an electrical engineering major, invented a real-time monitoring system and Head Up Display that provides biometric and environmental data to firefighters and the command-and-control center for the fire. In winning, they received \$20,000 plus a free patent filing and a spot in Flashpoint, a Georgia Tech accelerator that helps company founders develop their business model and formation.

This year, our InVenture winner will go on to compete for the [inaugural ACC InVenture Prize](#), modeled after our contest and scheduled for April 5-6 at Georgia Tech. All 15 Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) institutions have committed to send a representative team to the competition.

InVenture is just one of the many ways we are continuing to create a culture of innovation here at Georgia Tech. We have multiple student competitions throughout the year, and they all tap into our students’ innovative spirit and serve as great vehicles for developing the entrepreneurial confidence that will serve as a foundation for their success when they leave Georgia Tech. We hope you will have the opportunity to watch the ACC InVenture Prize finals, which will be broadcast live April 6 on GPB and other Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) stations in ACC market areas, and also streamed online.

G. P. "Bud" Peterson  
President, Georgia Tech